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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,  
FEBRUARY 1-2, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for February 1-2, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS  
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2. MERVAN GUL WITHDRAWS FROM SIIRT ELECTIONS (All papers) Mervan Gul of AK Party has withdrawn from the March 9 Siirt elections. Gul had been elected to the Parliament in the November 3 elections, but lost his status as a Member of Parliament after the Siirt elections were cancelled. Gul declared he would resign to open the way for AK Party leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan. "My party will make the decision regarding my candidacy," Erdogan said. Milli Gazete reported Gul submitted a petition regarding his withdrawal from the March 9 Siirt elections to the Higher Election Council (YSK) on January 31. According to Radikal newspaper, the Republican People's Party (CHP) has changed its list of Siirt candidates to attract votes of DEHAP members in Siirt. Turkiye and Radikal reported the February 1 acceptance of Gul's resignation by YSK.

3. CONTINUED ANTI-WAR SENTIMENTS IN THE SOUTHEAST (Milli Gazete/Bolge) The Adana Art Council issued an anti-war handbill declaration "Let There Not Be Wars." Representatives of various NGO's had signed the declaration. The declaration read: "There are efforts to re-draw paintings of blood and horror over Iraqi territories. Turkey and its neighbor Iraq is being pulled toward a catastrophe during which hundreds of people will die, children will become orphans, and families broken. We want neither this nor another war. We believe that it is possible for humanity, which is able to reason and talk, to solve its problems by way of understanding and compromise." The Diyarbakir Democratic Youth Platform held a press conference during which it declared it would stand against the possible U.S.-led war in Iraq. Evrensel reported Adana merchants, including a Turkish veteran of the Korean War, objected to fighting on the same side with the U.S. According to Milli Gazete, the nine-person Oral family of Iskenderun (Hatay) declared they would serve as human shields during any possible U.S.-led war in Iraq. Edip Oral, father of former President Suleyman Demirel's adopted daughter, is known for his anti-war struggle in the region.

4. TROOPS DISPATCHED TO IRAQI BORDER (Evrensel) Many soldiers and village guards affiliated with the Van Regiment Command have been dispatched to the Iraqi border within the framework of a possible U.S.-led operation against Iraq. A convoy of 100 vehicles, including ambulances, left for Semdinli (Hakkari). Turkiye and Sabah reported the dispatch by train of 800 soldiers from the (Istanbul-based) First Army to the Iraqi border.

5. FIRST TENTS ALONG IRAQI BORDER (Hurriyet) Turkey is trying to prevent a possible Iraq operation, while it continues to take measures against a possible influx of refugees in the event of war. Soldiers and village guards, together with Red Crescent Society officials, have begun to set up tents in Silopi (Sirnak) two kilometers away from the Iraqi border. Some military units have also been transferred to open fields along the border, with soldiers settling in tents and barracks hidden among trees. Leaves of public employees likely to be used in the event of a war have been suspended. Tents were set up on January

31 in Silopi, where the number of these tents is expected to reach 1,000 in the upcoming days. The tents reportedly accommodate 5-6 people each. An exercise is also scheduled for February 5 in preparation for a possible wave of refugees.

16. CHP LEADER BAYKAL IN PULUMUR (TUNCELI) (Turkiye) Deniz Baykal, leader of the Republican People's Party (CHP), traveled to Pulumur (Tunceli) on January 31 for inspections in the earthquake area. Answering journalists' questions on Cyprus and Iraq, Baykal criticized government policies. Cumhuriyet cited Baykal as saying that Turkey would suffer due to a possible Iraq war. "There is neither a legal, nor political nor ethical basis for this war," Baykal argued.

17. GOVERNORS' CIRCULAR (Turkiye/Hurriyet/Milliyet/Sabah) President Ahmet Necdet Sezer approved a circular regarding the appointment of 88 governors across the country. Under the circular, the State of Emergency (OHAL) Regional Governor, Gokhan Aydin, was appointed the National Security Director, while National Security Director Kemal Onal was appointed Adana Governor. Nusret Miroglu is the new Diyarbakir Governor. The outgoing Governors of Adiyaman, Bingol, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Mersin, Kahramanmaras, Malatya, Mus, Tunceli, Van, Sirnak, and Kilis have been transferred to Ankara.

18. EIGHTEEN ARRESTEES RELEASED IN IDIL (SIRNAK) (Evrensel) Eighteen of the 33 people arrested following the January 27 attack on the Idil (Sirnak) district Infantry Border Battalion were arraigned in a local court after four days of interrogation. The court released the 18 arrestees; the other 15 are still in custody. Also, the Diyarbakir chapter of the Human Rights Association (HRA) issued its report regarding operations launched after the attack. The report referred to such rights abuses as torture, home searches without permission, prolonged detention of arrestees, as well as refusal of permission for arrestees to sleep or meet with their relatives and attorneys, and refusal of food and drinks.

19. AK PARTY MARDIN DISTRICT OFFICE BOMBED (Evrensel) A Molotov cocktail was thrown at the Kiziltepe (Mardin) chapter of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). The explosion resulted in a fire that caused damage amounting to TL 15 billion (approx. USD 9,100). Firemen put out the fire, while an operation is underway to find the assailants.

110. MERSIN MHP DISTRICT CHAPTER PRESIDENT WOUNDED (Turkiye/Bolge) A man named Recep Ermis shot Gursel Aydin, President of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) district chapter in Mut (Mersin). The assailant shot Aydin in the leg, for an unknown reason, in front of the MHP building on January 31. Following the incident, Ermis was arrested.

111. PRO-OCALAN HUNGER STRIKES CONTINUE Evrensel reported continued hunger strikes in protest of the isolation of jailed KADEK/PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan over the past nine weeks. Van police intervened to disperse a group of 300 high school students protesting Ocalan's isolation and arrested many of them. Pro-Ocalan protests were also held in Batman, Diyarbakir, Sanliurfa, Siirt and Hakkari. Attorney Sezgin Tanrikulu, President of the Diyarbakir Bar Association, issued a joint statement by the presidents of Bar Associations in the East and Southeast. The statement characterized isolation of prisoners and inmates and refusal for them to meet with their attorneys and relatives as "unlawful." Amnesty International demanded the removal of isolation imposed on Ocalan.

112. RADIO OFFICIAL UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR KURDISH BROADCASTING (Evrensel) Sabri Ejder Ozic, Director of Adana's Radio Dunya, was summoned to the Adana Prosecutor's Office for his station's airing of Kurdish-language programs. Ozic said the radio had broadcast the programming due to local demand but then ended it

out of its own accord. Ozic added that the station had been previously closed for having aired Kurdish-language music.

**13. COURT APPROVAL FOR PERFORMANCE OF CHILDREN'S THEATER**

(Cumhuriyet) The children's play "Bookworms," which had been banned due to a lack of Installation Security Certificate, was performed in Gaziantep with permission from the Administrative Court. Ankara Unity Theater Director Gun Goker announced having staged the play previously in 19 other provinces. He added that his theater was staging children's plays in nearly all Eastern and Southeastern provinces every year. The Gaziantep ban had stemmed from a lack of a closed-circuit camera system in the hall.

**14. BATMAN INMATES MIGHT BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER PROVINCES**

(Evrensel) In an effort to decrease the number of inmates in the Batman Prison, prison officials circulated an announcement foreseeing the transfer of some of the inmates to other provinces. Presently, there are over 500 inmates in the 250-person prison. Thus far, only four of the inmates have agreed to be transferred to other provinces. Officials noted that inmates were reluctant to move because their families are all in Batman.

**15. FOUR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS ARRESTED IN RURAL HAKKARI**

(Turkiye) According to the Hakkari Governor's Office, security forces acting on a tip arrested four Afghans who had illegally crossed into Turkey. The arrests were made during a search of several homes in Yuksekova (Hakkari). Two Turks in whose homes the illegal immigrants were arrested were also arrested.

**16. VAN GOGH PAINTING IN ADANA**  
(Bolge/Hurriyet) According to the Adana Security Directorate, during a sting operation, Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime teams arrested three people looking for customers for a stolen Van Gogh painting smuggled into Turkey through Iraq. The painting was confiscated. The painting bears seals from Paris and Moscow art museums.

**ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS**  
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**17. SE BUSINESS LEADERS CALL FOR SOLUTION TO ECONOMIC PROBLEMS**

Evrensel reported that the economic crisis, which reached a peak during the government of Bulent Ecevit, continues to affect merchants, farmers, and the public. Hakkari residents call for measures to help reduce unemployment and expedite village returns. Mersin businessmen want due importance attached to the province's marine transportation. Gaziantep-based Sanko Holding Company President Abdulkadir Konukoglu characterized 2002 as a year of stagnation due to the economic crisis and parliamentary elections, with industries declining for the past three-four months. Unemployment remains Turkey's major problem, he added.

**18. "POSSIBILITY OF WAR HAS NEGATIVELY AFFECTED INVESTMENTS"**

(Turkiye/Milli Gazete) Saban Bas, President of the Adana Chamber of Commerce (ACOC), voiced opposition to a possible U.S.-led war in Iraq, saying, "The possibility of a war has negatively impacted investments in the region." When he looked up in the sky, he wanted to see cargo planes with export products and factories whose chimneys are smoking, not war planes, he said. Bas, together with ACOC members, went to the province's Organized Industrial Zone to inspect developments there and receive information from officials. Currently, 167 factories are operational and 85 others are under construction at the zone. Another 110 new factories are at the planning stage.

**19. GIZERLER CORPORATION INAUGURATES SHOPPING CENTER**

(Sabah/Hurriyet) Adana's Gizerler Corporation inaugurated a multi-storey shopping center on Turhan Cemal Beriker Boulevard in Adana. Adana Governor Oguz Kagan Koksali, Seyhan (Adana) Mayor Yildiray Arikan, Security Director Huseyin Capkin,

Adana Chamber of Commerce President Saban Bas attended the inauguration.

**120. LAY-OFFS IN ADANA**

(Bolge) Yusuf Yurekli, Regional Representative of the Confederation of the Revolutionary Workers' Unions (DISK), said a total of 12,286 private sector employees, all members of DISK, TURK-IS and HAK-IS labor unions, were laid off in 2002 due to the economic crisis. TURK-IS Regional Representative Huseyin Elbek said lay-offs mostly took place in the textile, metal, food and public service sectors.

HOLTZ